

News

from the Illinois Commerce Commission

Voice: Springfield. 217.782.5793 Chicago. 312.814.2850 FAX 217.524.0674 BBS 217.782.9233 <http://www.state.il.us>

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Beth Bosch

ICC APPROVES OVERLAY PLAN FOR 618 REGION NEW AREA CODE WILL BE 730

The Illinois Commerce Commission has issued an order establishing an “overlay” of a new area code, to supplement the telephone number supply in Illinois’ 618 area code. The new code will be 730.

The 618 area code region extends throughout southern Illinois from the Metro East area near St. Louis to the Indiana border.

The supply of unassigned telephone numbers in the current 618 code is expected to be available at least through the second quarter of 2008. However, ongoing number conservation efforts will very likely extend the forecasted exhaust date further out into the future.

The overlay plan, approved by the Commission on April 20, was selected as the least disruptive option for customers who currently have the 618 code. An overlay will serve the same geographic area, and allow all current customers to keep their 618 code, while new customers to the area may be assigned a telephone number with the new area code.

NeuStar, the numbering administrator under contract with Federal Communications Commission is responsible for assigning new area codes. NeuStar also identifies an area code as being in need of “relief” when it appears the numbers will run out in the near future. However, number conservation efforts and number pooling by telephone companies serving 618 customers have already helped to extend the life of the 618 area code several years beyond its originally anticipated exhaust date of 2001.

Telephone numbers in the new code will not be assigned until the 618 area code has reached exhaust. At that time, FCC rules mandate that all telephone calls be made dialing the full 10-digit or 1+10-digit phone number, even within the same area code region. This requirement does not affect the cost of the call. A local call will remain a local call, and a toll call will remain a toll call, regardless of the number of digits that are dialed to complete it.

Prior to the assignment of numbers with the new area code, customers in the 618 area code will have a period of time to adjust to dialing 10 or 1+10 digits to complete their calls.

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527 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, IL 62701